

to you in succession, and if your benevolence could so long be maintained in full exercise, and your rules for estimating lost nothing of their determinate principle in their application to such a confusion of subjects, you would often, during the disclosure, regret to observe how many things may be the causes of irretrievable mischief. Why is the path of life, you would say, so haunted as if with evil spirits of every diversity of noxious agency, some of which may patiently accompany, or others of which may suddenly cross, the unfortunate wanderer? And you would regret to observe into how many forms of intellectual and moral perversion the human mind readily yields itself to be modified.

As *one* of the number concluded the account of himself, your observation would be, I perceive with compassion the process under which you have become a misanthropist. If your juvenile ingenuous ardour had not been chilled on your entrance into society, where your most favourite sentiments were not at all comprehended by some, and by others deemed wise and proper enough—perhaps for the people of the millennium; if you had not felt the mortification of relations being uncongenial, of persons whom you were anxious to render happy being indifferent to your kindness, or of apparent friendships proving treacherous or transitory; if you had not met with such striking instances of hopeless stupidity in the vulgar, or of vain self-importance in the learned, or of the coarse or supercilious arrogance of the persons whose manners were always regulated by the consideration of the proportion of gold and silver by which they were better than you; if your mortifications had not given you a keen faculty of perceiving the all-pervading selfishness of mankind, while, in addition, you had perhaps a peculiar opportunity to observe the apparatus of systematic villany, by which combinations of men are able to arm their selfishness to oppress or ravage the world—you might even now, perhaps, have been the persuasive instructor of beings, concerning whom you are wondering why they should have been made in the form of rationals; you might have conciliated to yourself and to goodness, where you repel and are repelled; you might have been the apostle and pattern of benevolence, instead of envying the powers and vocation of a destroying angel. Yet not that the world should bear all the blame. Frail and changeable in virtue, you *might*